

**Amendments to the Claims:**

1-27. (canceled)

28. (currently amended) An isolated nucleic acid encoding a polypeptide having at least 80% ~~nucleic acid~~ sequence identity to:

(a) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of~~ SEQ ID NO:148 shown in Figure 92 (SEQ ID NO:148);

(b) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of~~ SEQ ID NO:148 shown in Figure 92 (SEQ ID NO:148), lacking its associated signal peptide;

(c) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the extracellular domain of the polypeptide~~ shown in Figure 92 (SEQ ID NO:148);

(d) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the extracellular domain of the polypeptide~~ shown in Figure 92 (SEQ ID NO:148), lacking its associated signal peptide;

(e) ~~the nucleic acid sequence shown in Figure 91 (SEQ ID NO:147);~~

[[f]] (c) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:147 shown in Figure 91 (SEQ ID NO:147); or

[[g]] (d) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 203224, wherein the encoded polypeptide induces chondrocyte proliferation.

29. (currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 28 encoding a polypeptide having at least 85% ~~nucleic acid~~ sequence identity to:

(a) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of~~ SEQ ID NO:148 shown in Figure 92 (SEQ ID NO:148);

(b) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of~~ SEQ ID NO:148 shown in Figure 92 (SEQ ID NO:148), lacking its associated signal peptide;

(c) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the extracellular domain of the polypeptide~~ shown in Figure 92 (SEQ ID NO:148);

~~(d) — a nucleic acid sequence encoding the extracellular domain of the polypeptide shown in Figure 92 (SEQ ID NO:148), lacking its associated signal peptide;~~

~~(e) — the nucleic acid sequence shown in Figure 91 (SEQ ID NO:147);~~

[[~~(f)~~]] (c) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:147 shown in Figure 91 (SEQ ID NO:147); or

[[~~(g)~~]] (d) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 203224, wherein the encoded polypeptide induces chondrocyte proliferation.

30. (currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 28 encoding a polypeptide having at least 90% ~~nucleic acid~~ sequence identity to:

(a) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the~~ amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:148 shown in Figure 92 (SEQ ID NO:148);

(b) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the~~ amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:148 shown in Figure 92 (SEQ ID NO:148), lacking its associated signal peptide;

~~(e) — a nucleic acid sequence encoding the extracellular domain of the polypeptide shown in Figure 92 (SEQ ID NO:148);~~

~~(d) — a nucleic acid sequence encoding the extracellular domain of the polypeptide shown in Figure 92 (SEQ ID NO:148), lacking its associated signal peptide;~~

~~(e) — the nucleic acid sequence shown in Figure 91 (SEQ ID NO:147);~~

[[~~(f)~~]] (c) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:147 shown in Figure 91 (SEQ ID NO:147); or

[[~~(g)~~]] (d) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 203224, wherein the encoded polypeptide induces chondrocyte proliferation.

31. (currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 28 encoding a polypeptide having at least 95% ~~nucleic acid~~ sequence identity to:

(a) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:148 shown in Figure 92 (SEQ ID NO:148);~~

(b) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:148 shown in Figure 92 (SEQ ID NO:148), lacking its associated signal peptide;~~

(c) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the extracellular domain of the polypeptide shown in Figure 92 (SEQ ID NO:148);~~

(d) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the extracellular domain of the polypeptide shown in Figure 92 (SEQ ID NO:148), lacking its associated signal peptide;~~

(e) ~~the nucleic acid sequence shown in Figure 91 (SEQ ID NO:147);~~

[[f]] (c) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:147 shown in Figure 91 (SEQ ID NO:147); or

[[g]] (d) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 203224,

wherein the encoded polypeptide induces chondrocyte proliferation.

32. (currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 28 encoding a polypeptide having at least 99% ~~nucleic acid~~ sequence identity to:

(a) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:148 shown in Figure 92 (SEQ ID NO:148);~~

(b) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:148 shown in Figure 92 (SEQ ID NO:148), lacking its associated signal peptide;~~

(c) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the extracellular domain of the polypeptide shown in Figure 92 (SEQ ID NO:148);~~

(d) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the extracellular domain of the polypeptide shown in Figure 92 (SEQ ID NO:148), lacking its associated signal peptide;~~

(e) ~~the nucleic acid sequence shown in Figure 91 (SEQ ID NO:147);~~

[[ (f) ] (c) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:147 shown in Figure 91 (SEQ ID NO:147); or

[[ (g) ] (d) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 203224, wherein the encoded polypeptide induces chondrocyte proliferation.

33. (currently amended) An isolated nucleic acid comprising:

(a) a nucleic acid sequence encoding the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:148 shown in Figure 92 (SEQ ID NO:148)

(b) a nucleic acid sequence encoding the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:148 shown in Figure 92 (SEQ ID NO:148), lacking its associated signal peptide;

~~(c) a nucleic acid sequence encoding the extracellular domain of the polypeptide shown in Figure 92 (SEQ ID NO:148);~~

~~(d) a nucleic acid sequence encoding the extracellular domain of the polypeptide shown in Figure 92 (SEQ ID NO:148), lacking its associated signal peptide;~~

[[ (e) ] (c) the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:147 shown in Figure 91 (SEQ ID NO:147);

[[ (f) ] (d) the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:147 shown in Figure 91 (SEQ ID NO:147); or

[[ (g) ] (e) the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 203224.

34. (currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 33 comprising a nucleic acid sequence encoding the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:148 shown in Figure 92 (SEQ ID NO:148).

35. (currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 33 comprising a nucleic acid sequence encoding the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:148 shown in Figure 92 (SEQ ID NO:148), lacking its associated signal peptide.

36. (canceled)
37. (canceled)
38. (currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 33 comprising the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:147 shown in Figure 91 ~~(SEQ ID NO:147)~~.
39. (currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 33 comprising the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:147 shown in Figure 91 ~~(SEQ ID NO:147)~~.
40. (previously presented) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 33 comprising the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 203224.
41. (canceled)
42. (canceled)
43. (canceled)
44. (previously presented) A vector comprising the nucleic acid of Claim 28.
45. (previously presented) The vector of Claim 44, wherein said nucleic acid is operably linked to control sequences recognized by a host cell transformed with the vector.
46. (previously presented) A host cell comprising the vector of Claim 44.
47. (previously presented) The host cell of Claim 46, wherein said cell is a CHO cell, an *E. coli* or a yeast cell.